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THE FALL OF THE MUTANTS

THE NEW MUTANTS®

SPECIAL DOUBLE-SIZED ISSUE!

THE BIRD-BOY HAD LED THE NEW MUTANTS TO AN ISLAND CALLED PARADISE, IN A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO SAVE HIS ANI-MATE FRIENDS, HIS LIKE-CREATURES, FROM THEIR VICIOUS CREATOR, THE ANI-MATOR. NOW, THOUSANDS OF FEET BELOW THE SURFACE OF PARADISE...

YOU WILL NEVER BE MEN... BE GIVEN CLOTHING... HAVE A NAME!

I SHALL DESTROY YOU! I SHALL DESTROY YOU ALL!

SUSPENDED ANI-MATION!

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YOU DON'T *DESERVE* A NAME... NAMES ARE FOR MEN... *BRAVE* MEN! *YOU* ARE A *COWARD.*

YOU FLED THE TESTING! SCARED IT WOULD *KILL* YOU, WEREN'T YOU?

hee-hee! I GAVE YOU BRAINS, I'LL SAY *THAT* FOR ME! YOU KNOW WHEN TO *FEAR!*

BUT YOU CAME *BACK*... *WITH* CREATURES FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD, AGAINST MY *LAW!*

LOT G

YOU KNOW THE LAW!!!

NO STRANGERS! NOT A ONE! *EVER*-- ON *MY* ISLAND! *KILL* THE STRANGERS! THAT IS THE *LAW!*

AND YOU *WELCOMED THEM!*

FRI- awk- *ENDS!*

SILENCE! ANIMALS *HAVE* NO FRIENDS!

YOU WERE TO HAVE BEEN MY MASTER-PIECE! AN *EXAMPLE* TO THE OTHERS. YOU HAVE BECOME AN EXAMPLE IN *INSURRECTION.*

YOU, MOST OF ALL, I WILL DESTROY!

GUNCH!

THAT MAD-MAN AIN'T BLUFFIN'!

I GOTTA TRY AN' STOP HIM 'FORE HE KILLS BIRD-BRAIN! 'FORE HE KILLS 'EM ALL!

SAM! WAIT! DON'T GO BLASTING OFF HALF-COCKED!

WHUMP!

YOU WERE RIGHT, DANI! I COULDN'T *STEER* WRAPPED UP IN THIS BLASTED NET!

HEY! MAYBE I CAN *SCARE* HIM INTO RELEASING US!

THUD!

COMMANDER HODGE!

YOU DIDN'T *WRITE!* YOU DIDN'T *CALL!* WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* HERE?

THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY *SEEM*... SIR... I CAN *EXPLAIN.*

MY *LOYALTY* IS TO *THE RIGHT,* I ASSURE YOU! OH, YES, INDEED! *THE RIGHT!*

WHO *IS* HE? AN' WHAT'S *THE RIGHT?*

WHO KNOWS! AT LEAST IT'S *WORKING.* NOW IF I CAN JUST...

YOU *KNOW* ME, COMMANDER, SIR! I WOULD NEVER FLOUT YOUR ORDERS! NO INSURRECTION HERE! Oh, NEVER!

WHAT--? HE WALKED RIGHT *THROUGH* YOU! HE--

WAIT! YOU AREN'T *COMMANDER HODGE,* AT ALL! IT'S--

--ONE OF YOUR *MIRAGES! ILLUSION!*

YOUR *FEAR...* YOUR GREATEST *FEAR...!*

YOU KNOW NOT *WHAT* YOU'RE *DEALING* WITH!

SURE, WE DO. A MAD, PAVLOVIAN *FRANKENSTEIN!*

FAH! YOU *KNOW* NOTHING... *ARE* NOTHING. *MUTANTS!* NOT EVEN HUMAN.

NATURE HAS SCRAMBLED YOUR GENETIC PATTERN MORE THOROUGHLY THAN I EVER COULD, EVEN WHILE IT GAVE YOU POWERS BEYOND HUMAN.

AND *CHANCE* GAVE YOU TO ME... A GIFT... AN *OPPORTUNITY!* hee-hee! I WON'T PASS UP! BELIEVE ME, I WON'T!

YOU MUTANTS KNOW NOTHING OF *CURIOSITY,* OF THE JOY OF *DISCOVERY...* oh *PRECIOUS* JOY...

...OF *CREATION...* IN WHICH *YOU* WILL PLAY YOUR HUMBLE PART-- AS PARTICIPANTS... PROGENITORS IF YOU WILL...

...OF MY *SLAVE RACE...*

...OF MANKIND'S *REDEEMERS...* FOR THROUGH MY *ANI-MATES...* MY *WONDERFUL* ANI-MATES...

...I WILL DELIVER HUMANITY FROM *DRUDGERY!*

SPLAT!

CAGE THESE NEW MUTANTS IN MY LABORATORY! SOON... THE EXPERIMENTS SHALL BEGIN!

COME-WITH-awk! FRIENDS!

HEY, YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE BIRD-BRAIN HERE! HE WANTS TO COME! HE'S ONE OF US! HE BELONGS WITH US!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ONE OF YOU? HE'S AN ANI-MATE... AN ANIMAL... UNTIL HE WINS OTHER STATUS.

BUT WAIT! WHY NOT? WHY NOT, INDEED? BRING HIM ALONG... FOR NOW!

LET HIM OBSERVE THE BITTER FRUITS OF HIS DIS-OBEDIENCE!

TALK ABOUT BITTER FRUITS!

YEAH! SEEMS TO BE LOTS O' THAT GOIN' AROUND. WE DISOBEYED MAGNETO, BROKE GROUNDIN' TA COME HERE AN' HELP OUT BIRD-BRAIN...

... AN' SEE WHERE IT GOT US... AN' HIM!

NO KIDDING! WITHOUT OUR HELP, THOSE ANIMATES WOULD HAVE BEEN TESTED NORMALLY AND MORE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE.

'TIS ODD, DOUG. THE *ANI-MATOR* ACTUALLY SOUNDS LIKE HE THINKS HE'S DOING SOMETHING *GOOD!*

YEAH, HE DOES, DOESN'T HE?

I READ SOMEWHERE THAT NAZI *TORTURERS* HAD COMPARTMENTALIZED MINDS, TOO.

EVEN THOUGH THEY ACTED EVIL, THEY DIDN'T SEE THEMSELVES THAT WAY.

IT'S A KIND OF PERCEPTUAL *MADNESS*, I GUESS, THAT LETS THE ANI-MATOR THINK HE'S ACCOMPLISHING SOMETHING *POSITIVE*...

...THROUGH HIS *ANIMAL LUST* FOR BLOOD AND DESTRUCTION.

ANIMAL LUST...? IS *THAT* WHAT MAKES HIM SO EVIL...?

Ssssss... ssp-KMMMM?

ME-OOOW?! You-SQUAWL-me, kit-YOWL-ten? Prrr!

DOUG, THEY'RE TALKING TO *ME*... *AREN'T* THEY? I... I CAN'T UNDERSTAND.

THANK HEAVEN YOUR POWER IS *LANGUAGES!* TELL ME, DOUG, WHAT'RE THEY *SAYING?*

THEY ASKED IF YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TURNS INTO THE ANIMAL CALLED *WOLFSBANE* AND... AND--

SHUT UP! SHUT YOUR FILTHY MOUTHS!

WHAP!
LEAVE HER ALONE--!
OW!
YOU-owwl-SHUT MOUTH!
NO!
HAW! HAW! HAW-- YOWL!
GRRR-yowl! BEASSSST!
FIGHT! LIKE-yike-AT!
Awk-NO!
BACK! GET BACK! YOU'VE HAD YOUR FUN!
CAGE THEM! NOW!
Like-creature! PAH!
I AM WHAT HE SAYS... LIKE AN ANIMAL! LIKE HIM!
HE HIT DOUG... AND MY... MY ANIMAL BLOOD LUST... LIKE DOUG SAID... IT OVERWHELMED ME!
PTUUH!
REVEREND CRAIG WAS RIGHT! I'M A WEREWOLF... EVIL.
I WAS TAUGHT TO FORGIVE MY TORMENTERS...
...BUT I CAN'T FORGIVE THEM FOR WHAT THEY'VE DONE... I JUST CAN'T!
I WISH... I WISH I'D RIPPED YOUR NASTY HEART OUT!

ME AND YOU -cough- BOTH. HE GASSED ME -cough- AGAIN.

AND YOU WILL BE *KEPT* GASSED! DO YOU THINK I WANT YOU TO RECOVER AND TELEPORT AWAY?

WHY -hee-hee- YOU'VE ONLY JUST *ARRIVED!*

RAHNE... LISTEN... IN YOUR *WOLF FORM* YOU'RE THE *STRONGEST* OF US! SWITCH TO IT!

TEST THE GLASS AND--

NO! I *WON'T!* I *CAN'T!* NOT BEFORE THOSE *CREATURES!*

THEY'RE *HORRID!* AND *EVIL!* AND IN MY *WOLF FORM* I HAVE SUCH EVIL THOUGHTS! I... I WANT TO *KILL* THEM...

I DON'T WANT TO EVER BE A WOLF *AGAIN!*

POOR LITTLE HALF-BREED! -hee-hee-

IT WOULD DO NO *GOOD!* BLOWS FROM WITHIN WON'T SHATTER THE CONTAINER!

THESE BATCHES OF ANI-MATES ARE *OBSOLETE... BORING!* THEY HAVE NO *POWERS!*

WHY DO YOU CREATURES GAPE AND CRINGE? -hee hee- AFRAID I'LL FIND *YOU* BORING?

YOU *KNOW* WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY, DON'T YOU? PICK UP YOUR *CUDGELS*, MY ANI-MATES...

... AND *DESTROY* LOT G!

KRA-SMASH!

KRASH

destr-AWK! destro-AWK!

WHAT? YOU DARE TO *MIMIC* ME? TO *MOCK* ME? TO GIVE *ORDERS*?

WHO TAUGHT *YOU* TO SPEAK?!?

SMASH!

CRACK!

SMACH

NO- awrk!

AND *YOU*-- BE *SILENT*, TOO!

WHAK!

NO!

WHY DO THEY *DO* IT? *OBEY* HIM? *KILL* THEIR OWN KIND? WHY DON'T THEY TURN ON *HIM*?

I DUNNO, RAHNE! MAYBE THEY'RE TOO SCARED... OR MAYBE THEY *LIKE* IT!

IT'S... IT'S *HORRIBLE*! *THEY'RE* HORRIBLE!

AND I'M *LIKE* THEM... THIS *MAKES* ME LIKE THEM... BUT I CAN'T LET THOSE LITTLE CREATURES BE DESTROYED...

...WITHOUT USING MY *WHOLE STRENGTH*... TO TRY AND *SAVE* THEM!

ONLY... IT'S NO *USE*!

STRONG AS MY *WEREWOLF* FORM IS... I CAN'T *GET OUT*!

RAHNE, LISTEN! I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I SAID EARLIER! ABOUT ANIMAL LUST! I DIDN'T MEAN *YOU!*

DON'T BE ASHAMED OF HAVING AN ANIMAL FORM. *BIRD-BRAIN'S* A MAN-ANIMAL AND HE'S *GREAT,* ISN'T HE?

AS GOOD AS ANY HUMAN, *BETTER* THAN SOME!

AND *YOUR* POWER'S REALLY *USEFUL!* ALL I CAN DO IS DECIPHER *LANGUAGES.*

AT LEAST YOU CAN *DO* SOMETHING! I MOSTLY FEEL PRETTY *HELPLESS*... ESPECIALLY AT TIMES LIKE THIS.

WE'RE *ALL* HELPLESS RIGHT NOW, DOUG!

I DON'T HAVE AN ANIMAL FORM, RAHNE, BUT WHEN WE GET *OUT* OF HERE, AND WE *WILL*...

...YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO STAND IN *LINE* FOR THE CHANCE TO RIP OUT THAT MONSTER'S *THROAT!*

WHAT'RE WE GONNA *DO?*

WELL... THE ANIMATOR HAS A *BOSS* HE'S SCARED OF! IT SOUNDS LIKE HE'S *CHEATING* HIM.

YEAH! MAYBE WE CAN TURN IT TO OUR ADVANTAGE. BUT WHO *IS* IT... AND WHERE IS HE WHEN WE *NEED* HIM?

I WONDER WHERE *MAGNETO* IS! HE *MUST* KNOW WE'RE GONE AND WE LEFT LOTS OF CLUES BACK AT THE SCHOOL...!

MAGNETO'S *SMART.* HE HELPED ME ONCE WHEN I WAS IN TROUBLE IN LIMBO!

HE'LL FIND US... AND THEN HE'LL USE HIS MAGNETIC POWER TO RIP THIS PLACE APART!

PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS! HA!

MAGNETO'S SCHOOL OF *MISSING* STUDENTS WOULD BE A BETTER NAME!

EXCLAMATIONALARM! SELF WAS CERTAIN THAT SELFRIENDOUG WOULD BE WAITING FOR SELF!

WHERE HAS HE GONE? WHY IS HE NOT *HERE?* MIGHT HE NOT BE IN TROUBLE? SHOULD WE NOT GO TO *SAVE* HIM?

YEAH! ME AN' 'LOCK COME HOME AND THE *OTHERS* RUN AWAY! NOT MUCH OF AN IMPROVEMENT, IS IT?

GLASS SCATTERED ON THE FLOOR! DANI'S HORSE GONE FROM THE PASTURE!

ALL OF THEM--EVEN *BIRD-BRAIN*--GONE... VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE!

QUERY: DEFINE *BIRD-BRAIN*, MAGNETO*TEACHER*SIR!

THE *BIRD-BOY!* SURELY YOU READ ABOUT IT IN THE *PAPERS!*

MY STUDENTS SECRETLY *RESCUED* HIM... WERE BEGINNING TO CIVILIZE HIM... SOMEWHAT...

...WHEN A CHILDISH *DARE* LANDED THEM IN TROUBLE WITH THE *MALT SHOPPE!*

THEY SHOULD NEVER HAVE ACTED SO IRRESPONSIBLY! I *GROUNDED* THEM!

I DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE XAVIER'S KNACK FOR KEEPING MY STUDENTS SAFELY AND QUIETLY AT SCHOOL...

...BUT I KNOW HOW I MIGHT *FIND* THEM!

MAGNETO-*TEACHER*SIR, WHERE ARE YOU *GOING?*

TO THE *HELLFIRE CLUB*... TO LOCATE MY MISSING STUDENTS THROUGH THEIR MUTANT LOCATION *EQUIPMENT!*

AND REMEMBER, BOY! WHATEVER HAPPENS, YOU AND WARLOCK ARE TO REMAIN *HERE!*

DID YOU HEAR HIM, WARLOCK? HE'S GOING TO THE *HELLFIRE CLUB!*

IT IS A "WRETCHED HIVE OF SCUM AND VILLAINY"... LIKE MOS EISLEY CANTINA IN *STAR WARS* MOVIE, IS IT NOT, SELFRIENDBOBBY?

YEAH, WARLOCK, AT *LEAST* THAT BAD! SINCE WHEN DID HE GET SO COZY WITH THE *HELLFIRE CLUB?*

I GUESS THERE'VE BEEN SOME *CHANGES* AROUND HERE WHILE WE WERE GONE, *huh?*

AT LEAST THEY LEFT US FOOD AND MUSIC AND MAYBE WE CAN FIND SOME *CLUES!*

THERE'S A PICTURE OF THE BIRD BOY IN THE NEWS AND...

...*BIRD BOY, FOUND ON AN ICE-FLOE IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC AND BROUGHT TO MANHATTAN, WHERE HE ESCAPED FROM QUARANTINE.*

DONAMITE DONUTS

CLICK!

'BIRD-BOY' FOUND IN NORTH ATLANTIC

NOTHING FURTHER WAS HEARD FROM HIM UNTIL LAST NIGHT WHEN HE ALLEGEDLY ROBBED A McBURGER'S AND FLEW NORTH TOWARD...

NORTH, huh?

SELFRIENDBOBBY! THERE ARE *MAPS* ON TABLE WITH *ISLAND GROUP* CIRCLED! *THEY* ARE *NORTH!*

THAT'S WHERE THEY'VE *GONE!* MAGNETO *SAID* WE WERE S'POSED TO STAY HERE BUT...

SELFRIEND, NO ONE *EVER* SEEMS TO *STAY HERE.*

YOU'RE RIGHT! AT LEAST *THIS* TIME WE'LL LEAVE A *NOTE!*

I'VE GOT THE *MAPS*, WARLOCK!

THINK THINK THINK

C'MON! LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE *ROAD!*

WHILE BACK ON PARADISE...

MAST-urp!

MAST-urp!

PIC-turp!

CRASH!

SLASH!

WHAT--!?

HE'S CALLING ME! BUT... *WHY?!?*

AND WHY *NOW?* HE *CAN'T* SUSPECT--!

IT'S YOU! SIR! COMMANDER! I WOULD LOVE TO STOP AND CHAT...

...BUT THE BATTLE AGAINST THE MUTANT ATTACKERS CONTINUES APACE! *APACE!* →hee hee← Oh, YES, INDEED!

WE NOTICED THAT YOU RAN A COMPUTER CHECK ON THE IDENTITIES OF CERTAIN MUTANT CHILDREN.

TOK TOK TOK TAK

YOU WOULDN'T TRY TO CHEAT US, SCIENTIST? YOU ARE FULFILLING THE CONTRACT?

IF THE RIGHT IS TO RID THE WORLD OF MUTANTS AND INSURE THAT HOMO-SAPIENS REMAIN THE DOMINANT SPECIES...

...THEN WE MUST LEARN TO PUT A STOP TO MUTATIONS ALTOGETHER.

YOU ARE WORKING TO DISCOVER HOW WE MIGHT DO THAT...?

CERTAINLY... CERTAINLY. USING THE ANIMAL SPECIMENS THE RIGHT SUPPLIED ME WITH.

AND NOW I HAVE THESE CHILDREN FOR MUTANT SUBJECTS. OR... OR WILL HAVE, ONCE THEY ARE SUBDUED.

YOU WOULDN'T LIE TO ME, SCIENTIST?

ME? LIE?

YOU'VE LIED BEFORE. I FOUND YOU IN JAIL, REMEMBER?

YOU THREW AWAY A BRILLIANT RESEARCH CAREER, DID YOU NOT?

THE UNIVERSITY THAT EMPLOYED YOU WAS NOT... UNDERSTANDING WHEN YOUR CURIOSITY LED YOU TO IGNORE THE MEDICAL RESEARCH FOR WHICH YOU WERE HIRED...

...TO CONCENTRATE ON RESEARCH CONCERNING MUTATIONS. YOU FAKED RESULTS ON THE EFFICIENCY OF CERTAIN MEDICINES...

...AND WHEN SOME OF THEM PROVED LETHAL TO PATIENTS, YOUR METHODS WERE CHECKED.

AS I RECALL, YOU LOATHED JAIL!

AND THAT'S PRECISELY... PRECISELY WHY I'M SO GRATEFUL TO THE RIGHT... AND WOULD NEVER LIE TO YOU... NOR FAKE RESULTS.

YOU'VE *SEEN* MY RESULTS.

ON PAPER, SCIENTIST! WE HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TEST THEM. THOUGH SOON...

SCIENTIST, WHY ARE YOU WEARING THAT RIDICULOUS OUTFIT? AND WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR HEAD?

YOU LOOK LIKE A MAD HATTER!

A *JEST*, SIR... A SIMPLE... JEST!

A *PLEASURE* TALKING TO YOU, COMMANDER. I'LL NOTIFY YOU WHEN ALL HAS BEEN *SECURED!*

UNTIL THEN, FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY, *STAY AWAY!*

TIK!

TOK!TOK!

IN A *PIG'S EYE!*

AFTER OUR RESEARCH LOSSES, WE CAN'T *AFFORD* TO LOSE THOSE MUTANT CHILDREN!

SET OUR COURSE FOR *PARADISE.*

WHILE MILES TO THE SOUTH...

AWRIGHT, WE HIT GREENLAND... brrrr!

...TURNED SOUTH EAST AT CAPE FAREWELL...

...uh, WARLOCK, WE OUGHTTA BE THERE BY NOW!

I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT I THINK WE OVERSHOT OUR LATITUDE!

WE BETTER GO BACK THE WAY WE CAME!

WHILE MANY MILES AWAY...

MAD HATTER, INDEED! THE IGNORANT LOUT! TO WEAR AN ANIMAL'S TROPHY IS TO STEAL HIS FIERCENESS.

HEY, YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE MAKING ANIMAL MEN, WERE YOU?

MY GENE-SPLICED HYBRIDS? CERTAINLY NOT!

THOUGH THE REASONS FOR THEIR CREATION WERE NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE RIGHT'S GOALS, IF ONLY THEY COULD SEE IT THAT WAY!

FOR INSTANCE, MY WATER BABIES WERE CREATED TO "MAN" UNDER-WATER URANIUM MINES. OTHER ANI-MATES WILL HAVE OTHER SPECIALITIES.

ONCE MY CREATURES ARE INTRODUCED TO THE WORLD... WITH THE PATENTS FIRMLY IN PLACE, OF COURSE... I WILL BE FAMOUS...

...WEALTHY BEYOND IMAGINING. AND HUMANITY WILL HAVE A LEGAL SLAVE RACE TO RELIEVE IT FROM INHUMAN DRUDGERY.

WHY... THEY COULD EVEN FIGHT HUMANITY'S WARS. BUT, OF COURSE, THE RIGHT WILL OBJECT!

AND WE SHALL QUARREL! AND THAT'S WHY MY ORIGINAL SELECTION WAS FOR FIERCE-NESS.

BUT NOW, I HAVE SOMETHING BETTER IN MIND!

TAKE *BIRD-BRAIN* OFF INTO THE MAZE WITH THE REST OF HIS REBELLIOUS LOT AND *KILL* THEM!

NO! YOU CAN'T! YOU MUSTN'T!

Friend! Fri-AWK-end!

Oh, MUSTN'T I, INDEED?

I SHALL ALSO DESTROY MY *LABORATORY*... AND SPIRIT *YOU* AWAY.

I SHALL USE YOU... OR *PART* OF YOU →*hee hee*← TO CREATE A MUTANT/ ANIMATE *ARMY*...

...TO GIVE THEM YOUR *POWERS*...!

AND A MOST *ATTRACTIVE* POWER YOURS IS. →*hee hee*←

TAKE THE DONORS TO MY SHIP VIA THE ELEVATOR!

AND HANDLE THOSE TUBES *CAREFULLY!* DROP THEM AT YOUR *PERIL*.

I SHALL FOLLOW WHEN THE *AUTO-DESTRUCT* SEQUENCE HAS BEGUN.

DOUG, I HAVE AN IDEA. TELL THEM THAT THE ANIMATOR WON'T LEAVE THEM ALIVE...

...THAT HE'S *BORED* WITH THEM... LIKE *BIRD-BRAIN*... AND HE PLANS TO DROP THEM INTO THE MAZE TO DIE, TOO!

HE'LL PROBABLY DO IT, TOO! OKAY, DANI, HERE GOES...

Squawk-GRUNT-BORED-uprnh-KILL-Squawk-MAZE!

UMPH! NOT!

No! Grumph! No!

YEAH... HE REALLY WILL! SEE?

Ump-MAZE!

Tik-Snap-FALL!

RUN!

CRASH! SMASH!

CRASH!!!

Oh NO!

FOOLS! WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE*? YOU'VE LET THEM *LOOSE!*

REINFORCEMENTS! I NEED REINFORCEMENTS!

ANI-MATE *WARRIORS! ASSEMBLE! PUNISH* THEM!

BUT LEAVE THEM *ALIVE*... oh YES! *DONORS*... FOR THE GOOD OF THE ANI-MATE RACE! →hee-hee←!

'LEAST... I CAN BREATHE AGAIN.

WHERE'D THEY ALL *COME* FROM?

CRAWLED OUTTA THE WOODWORK.

TOUGH! WHAT'VE *THEY* GOT WE HAVEN'T GOT?

FANGS AN' *CLAWS*, FOR STARTERS. AN' THERE MUST BE *FIFTY* OF 'EM!

I CAN ALMOST FEEL MY *SOUL-SWORD* IN MY HAND, IT WANTS TO COME TO ME FROM LIMBO*, DANI, I CAN *FEEL* IT...!

MAKE IT STAY THERE, ILLYANA! AS LONG AS IT'S THERE, *LIMBO* IS PARTLY UNDER YOUR CONTROL.

WE CAN'T CHANCE IT GETTING TOO DANGEROUS TO *TELEPORT*.

ESPECIALLY SINCE WE CAN WIN *WITHOUT* THE SWORD...

*A SORCEROUS DIMENSION WHICH ILLYANA USES TO TRAVEL THROUGH TIME AND SPACE --Ann.

MAYBE NOT... WITH YOU REDUCED TO THROWING ROCKS AND STICKS. AND WE DON'T HAVE MUCH *TIME*.

LOOK-- I'M 'PORTING HOME TO GET *MAGNETO*.

HE HELPED ME IN LIMBO AGAINST *DEMONS*. HE'LL MAKE MINCEMEAT OF *THESE* GUYS.

WE GOTTA THINK OF THE ANI-MATE KIDS AND MAGNETO'S PROBABLY WORRIED *SICK* AND--

MAGNETO! MAGNETO-- I'M HOME!

WHERE *ARE* YOU?

I KNOW WE RAN OFF WHEN YOU TOLD US NOT TO...

...BUT IT WAS FOR A GOOD CAUSE AND NOW WE'RE IN *TROUBLE*...

...AND WE NEED YOUR HELP 'CAUSE OTHER... WELL... *PEOPLE*, SORT OF, ARE IN TROUBLE, TOO, AND... AND...

YOU'RE NOT *HERE*, ARE YOU?

DIDN'T YOU *NOTICE* WE WERE GONE? DON'T YOU *CARE*?

I GUESS YOU *DON'T*... AND ALL I CAN DO IS GO BACK AND TELL THEM...

...BUT I'M NOT GOING BACK *EMPTY-HANDED!*

WHOMP!

HE ISN'T AT THE SCHOOL.

IT *FIGURES!* IT'S JUST *LIKE* HIM TO BE SOMEWHERE ELSE WHEN WE NEED HIM.

I GOT IT! HEY, ILLYANA, CALL UP A *STEPPING DISC*...

...AND WE'LL SEND THESE *JERKS* TO FEED LIMBO'S *DEMONS*.

HEY! STOP! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

NO! LET ME *GO!*

YOU'RE *KIDDING*, RIGHT? WHY SHOULD I?

THE COMPUTER IS ON *AUTO-DESTRUCT*, YOU FOOL. IT'S SET TO *BLOW*. THIS ISLAND WILL BE DESTROYED...

...AND ALL OF *YOU*... AND EVEN I... WILL DIE! I AM A *GENIUS*. I MUST *ESCAPE*.

ESCAPE?!? JUST *STOP* IT!

I'M A *GENETICIST*, FOOL, I'M NOT A *PROGRAMMER*. I DON'T KNOW *HOW* TO STOP IT.

SOME *GENIUS!*

DOUG, *YOU* SPEAK COMPUTER. *DO SOMETHING! FAST!*

DO SOMETHING... IN *EIGHT SECONDS?*

DESTRUCT PROG RUNNING TIME REMAININ

ØØ8

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT LANGUAGE IT *SPEAKS*.

COME ON... COME ON...

COME ON!

TAK TOK TOK TOK TAK TOK TAK TOK TAK TOK TOK

BAM!

DESTRUCT PROGRAM TERMINATED

AWRIGHT!

SAM! SAM! I DID IT!

WE WON!

ISN'T IT *WONDERFUL?*

SEE, ILLYANA, WE DIDN'T NEED YOUR SWORD, AFTER ALL.

OR MAGNETO.

YEAH! WE *DID* IT!

BUT... IT WASN'T *LIKE* MAGNETO NOT TO *BE* THERE.

NEVER MIND, ILLYANA. HE'LL GET BACK SOON ENOUGH... *AND* FIND OUT WHAT WE'VE DONE.

ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU 'PORT BIRD-BRAIN AND HIS FRIENDS TO THE SCHOOL.

OHMIGOSH, BIRD-BRAIN! I ALMOST FORGOT! THEY TOOK HIM OFF IN THE ELEVATOR. WE BETTER *HURRY.*

BE KINDA FUN... ESPECIALLY HAVIN' LITTLE ANIMAL KIDS CRAWLIN' 'ROUND THE SCHOOL.

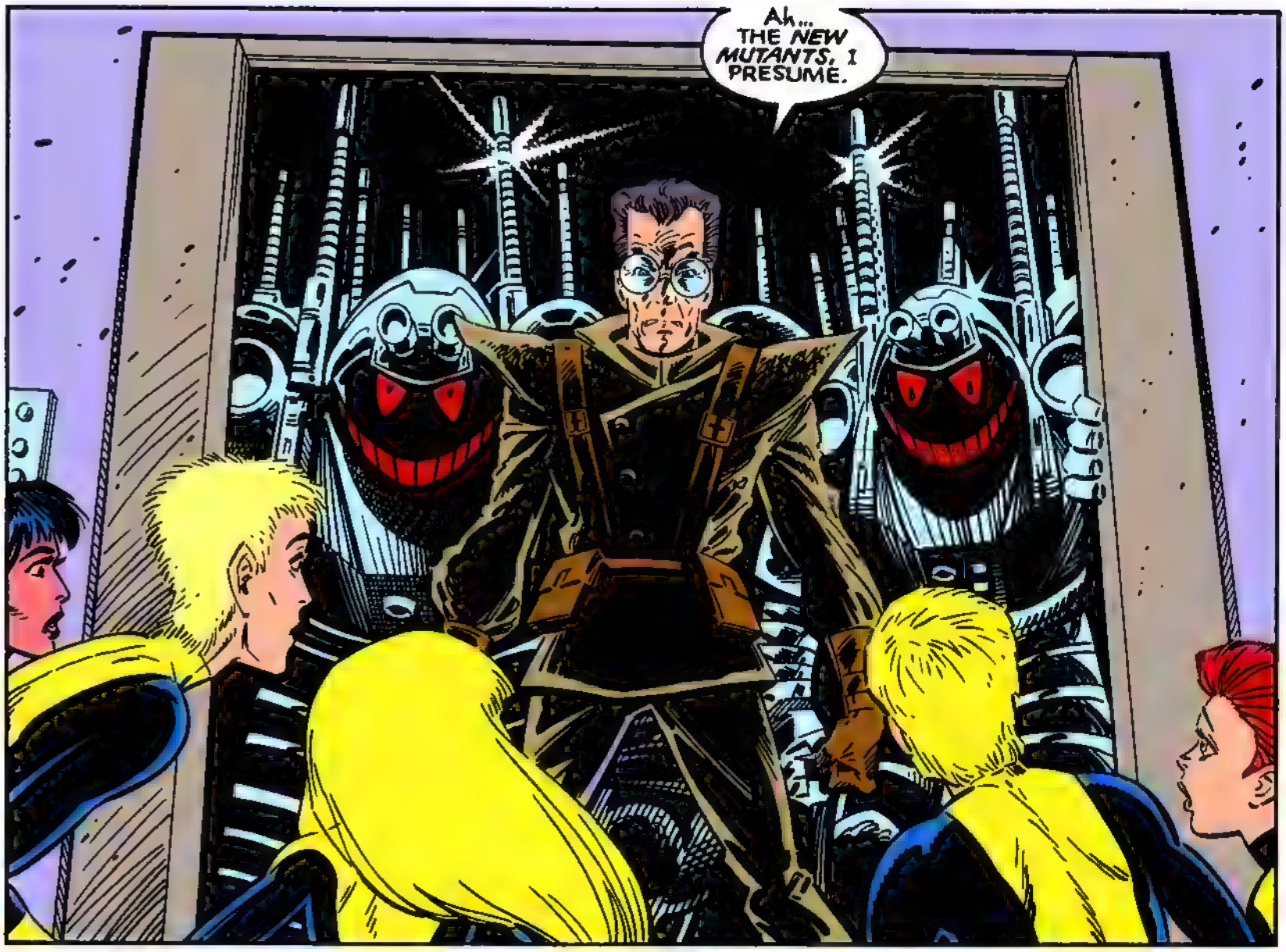
TELL THAT TO *MAGNETO!*

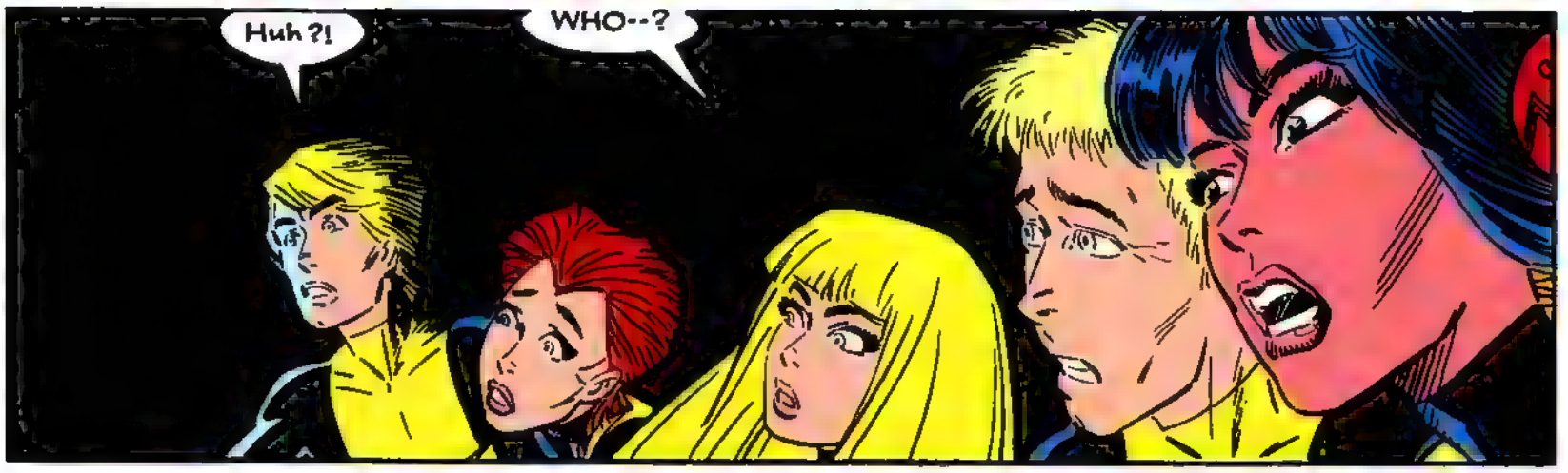
THOUGH YOU MUSTN'T SPEAK OF THEM AS THOUGH THEY'RE *PETS*, SAM. THEY'RE PEOPLE...

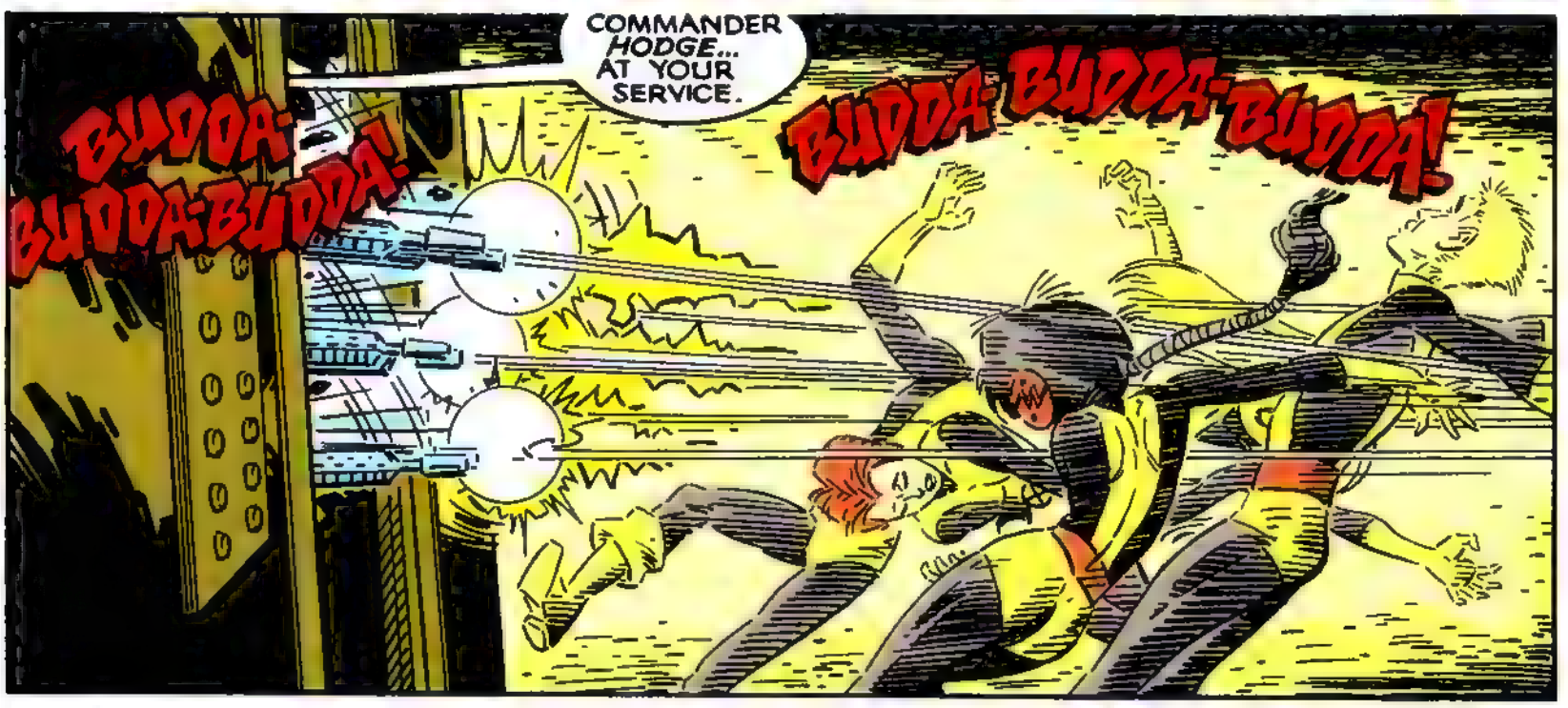
SORT OF. IMAGINE... A WHOLE *SCHOOL* OF *BIRD-BRAINS.*

ARE WE LUCKY OR WHAT...? *HERE* IT *IS.*

SHWIIIIIIP!


Ah... THE NEW MUTANTS, I PRESUME.


Huh?!
WHO--?


COMMANDER HODGE... AT YOUR SERVICE.
BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!
BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

SIR, YOUR *SCIENTIST* WAS TRYING TO ESCAPE.

THAT DOES NOT SURPRISE ME IN THE LEAST, CONSIDERING...!

WHY ARE YOU WEARING THAT *COSTUME*, SCIENTIST? WHY CAN YOU NEVER OBEY *ORDERS*?

YOU WERE HIRED TO INSURE *HUMAN* SUPERIORITY. AND YOU CREATE INHUMAN *MONSTERS*.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE *HERE!* YOU *SWORE* YOU'D STAY AWAY! YOU *LIED* TO ME!

YOU COMPLAIN TO *ME* OF LIES?!

WHAK!

AND YET... YOU HAVE DONE *THE RIGHT* A SERVICE.

WE *NEEDED* THESE MUTANT SUBJECTS TO REPLACE OTHERS RECENTLY... LOST. *

THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN OF MORE USE TO *ME!* IF ONLY YOU COULD *SEE...!* AND NOW YOU'VE *KILLED* THEM!

HARDLY.

* IN X-FACTOR #23 -- Ann.

NOT *DEAD*? →hee hee← NOT *DEAD*?!? MY *GLASSES*! BRING ME MY *GLASSES*...! I MUST *SEE*!

REMOVE THE *TRANQUILIZER DARTS* AND STRAP THE NEUTRALIZERS ON THE MUTANTS *CANNONBALL* AND *MAGIK*!

THEIR POWERS MIGHT FACILITATE ESCAPE.

Mast-urp! Glass-urp! Glass-URP!

FILTHY CREATURE!

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

FOOL! YOU BROUGHT ME *GLASSES* →hee hee←! BETTER TO BRING ME *GUNS*... OR *BOMBS*!

MAKE A SWEEP THROUGH THE COMPLEX! I WANT ALL THESE MONSTERS *DEAD*!

AWRIGHT, SOLDIERS! YOU HEARD THE COMMANDER. SET RIFLES ON *KILL*!

A WASTE! A WASTE! I GAVE YOU BRAINS-- BUT NOT *ENOUGH*. IT SEEMS! A MIRACLE *YOU* SURVIVED THE MAZE!

BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

SSSSSs! Who ISSS't?

Awk-WHO-?

HEY, DIG IT. IT TALKS.

NOT FOR LONG.

BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA

HAVE A NICE DAY!

No!

YOWWWL!

No!

BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

GUNCH!

THUD!

MAZE- awk!

HAVE- awk- NICE DAY!

YOU-? FIGHT- squawk?

SSSTOP! Sssscared.

Sssoldiersss. Bulletssss.

Sssslay usss.

Friendsss. Promisssss!

COME!

FIGHT- squawk- TO-awk-GETHER!

AND SOON...

THE *SCIENTIST* IS SECURED! NOW GET THE *MUTANTS* ON BOARD AND PREPARE FOR TAKE-OFF!

No!

FRI-awk-ENDS!

BIRD-BRAIN! YOU *WONDERFUL* CREATURE!

HEY!

CHONK!

NO KIDDING! *GOOD MOVE*, PAL!

BUT LISTEN! THESE *SMILE-FACES* HAVE GUNS! NOW THAT YOU'VE FREED US, *KEEP BACK* AND LET *US* DO THE FIGHTING!

YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED ENOUGH!

No!

Af-arwk-fraid! RAN-SQUAWK-island! Now-squoak-*FIGHT!* ALL fight!

GET IT, RAHNE? HE THINKS HE ACTED LIKE A COWARD WHEN HE ESCAPED AND CAME TO *US*!

HE SAYS HE CAN'T RUN AWAY THIS TIME!

HE *WON'T!*

SSSceaSSSe!

RRIP!

BUDDA

BUDDA

BUDDA!

BITE THROUGH THE STRAPS ON CANNONBALL AND MAGIK'S HELMETS!

NONE OF THEM WILL RUN!

ANI-MATES, *LISTEN* TO ME!

CHOMP

CRU-tik-CHUNK!

AWRIGHT! THE *MUTIES* ARE BACK IN *ACTION!*

CHUMK!

KA-THUD!

WHERE THE HECK AM--IIIIEE!

HEY, WARLOCK! I THINK WE FOUND 'EM!

SELF IS PREPARED TO FIGHT TO THE FINICH!

WARLOCK! SUNSPOT! MAN oh MAN! JUST THE ADVANTAGE WE NEEDED!

BAM!

BIFF!

WHAP WHAP WHAP WHAP

WE THOUGHT YOU RAN AWAY! WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?

EXPLANATION: SELF HAS COME TO RESCUE SELF'S MUCH EMBATTLED DEARFRIENDS-NEWMUTANTS!

RIP

SNAP

YEAH! IT SURE LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY HAS TO!

AND SELF IS EVER READY TO BE OF ASSISTANCE TO--

DOUG...? SELF*DEAREST*-FRIEND*DOUG*...?

YEAH, 'LOCK, IT'S *ME!* SELFFRIEND OLE PAL, YOU CAN'T *IMAGINE* HOW MUCH I MISSED YOU!

SELF MISSED YOU, TOO, DEARFRIEND.

REAL *TOUCHING*, MONSTER!

GUYS LIKE *ME*... WE DON'T MISS *NOTHIN'*!

WARLOCK! NO! WATCH OUT!

BUDDA-BUDDA!

BUDDA-BUDDA!

EXCLAMATION: *HEAD* DOWN, DEARFRIENDOUG, LEST YOU *LOSE* IT!

KEEP SAFE! JOYOUS REUNION MUST AWAIT DEFEAT OF VILLAINS!

MAN, WHAT A *DRAG!* WARLOCK'S FIGHTING THOSE *SMILE FACES*...

CHONK!

...THEY *ALL* ARE...

...AND THE BEST I CAN DO IS *HIDE* AND STAY OUT OF TROUBLE...

...'CAUSE IF I TRY TO HELP, I JUST *DISTRACT* THEM AND PUT THEM IN MORE *DANGER!*

KPLASH!

THERE ARE TOO MANY SUPER-SOLDIERS! AND THEY ARE TOO WELL ARMED!

BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

THE MUTANTS AND MY ANI-MATES COMBINED STAND NO CHANCE AGAINST THEM!

WAP! THUMP!

BUT HODGE HAS FORGOTTEN ME ←hee hee→ AND HIS PLANE HAS PROVIDED ME WITH A WEAPON!

THE WOLF-GIRL ATTACKS A RIGHT SOLDIER! PITIABLE!

SLAM!

WUMP!

BLAM BLAM

SHE DOESN'T ←hee hee→ HAVE A PRAYER! I MUST DO SOMETHING!

AND I SHALL!

BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

RAHNE! HE'S GOT A GUN!

OF COURSE HE DOES, YOU SILLY! KEEP BACK, DOUG, I'LL SOON WRENCH IT FROM HIM!

I WILL PROTECT MY INTERESTS! IF I CAN'T HAVE THE MUTANT...

...NOBODY WILL!

BLAM BLAM BLAM

RAHNE! WATCH OUT!

WOLF GIRL! YOU AND YOUR MUTIE BUDDY'RE HAMBURGER!

DOUG! GET *BACK!* PLEASE! I CAN HANDLE HIM *ALONE!* HE'S STILL ARMED AND *DANGEROUS* AND YOU HAVE NO POWERS!

I KNOW YOU MEANT WELL...

...BUT *WHATEVER* DID YOU THINK YOU WERE *DOING?*

Awk- *NO!*

NO GUNS!

DON'T... BE MAD... RAINE... I...

...I'LL NEVER...

...DO IT...

...AGA- N ...

ENOUGH! THIS NONSENSE IS GETTING US NOWHERE!

THIS... DISASTER... DEMONSTRATES, BEYOND A DOUBT, THAT MY PLAN TO MERELY CONTAIN AND DISCREDIT MUTANTS IS WORTHLESS!

EVEN MUTANT CHILDREN ARE FAR TOO DANGEROUS TO BE ALLOWED TO LIVE.

YOU... SOLDIER! FOLLOW ME ABOARD THE SHIP...!

AS OF NOW, THE RIGHT LAUNCHES ITS ALL-OUT WAR OF GENOCIDE!

RRRRMMMM

READY THE CHARGES!

I SHALL REDUCE THE ISLAND TO RUBBLE!

HOLY COW! BOMBS! DANI! GET OUTTA THE WAY!

RRRRRMMMMMM

BOOM!

EXCELLENT! ANOTHER SWEEP AND EVERY *MUTANT*... EVERY *MONSTER*... ON OR *BELOW* THE SURFACE... WILL *PERISH!*

COME ON, 'LOCK! GET ME UP THERE AN I'LL RIP THAT PLANE APART!

QUERY: DO SELF'S EYES DECEIVE SELF?

SELF PERCEIVES THAT THE WATER ITSELF REACHES OUT TO HALT THIS DREAD *ATTACK!*

MADRE DE DIOS! NOT THE WATER... BUT THE BEINGS WHO *OCCUPY* IT! A CREATURE BOTH *OCTOPUS*... AND *MAN!*

A CREATURE TOO *HIDEOUS*... TOO *TERRIBLE* TO *LIVE!*

WARLOCK! GET US *OUT* OF HERE! *HURRY!*

ANY SECOND NOW... THAT PLANE'S GONNA...

WRROOMMPH

WHILE BACK ON SHORE...

ATTEND ME, CREATURE! THERE WERE TO BE *NO STRANGERS!* NOT A ONE! NOT *EVER*-- ON *MY* ISLAND!

KILL THE STRANGERS-- THAT IS THE *LAW!* AND YET YOU *LED* THEM HERE! FIRST THE YOUNG *MUTANTS*...

...THEN *HODGE* AND HIS *RIGHT*-HAND MEN --hee hee!-- IF MEN THERE REALLY ARE BENEATH THAT ARMOR!

Ah, WHAT A BATTLE! THEY CAME... THEY SAW... BUT THE *MUTANTS* HAVE CONQUERED --hee hee-- WHAT *SUBJECTS* THEY WOULD HAVE MADE!

YOU... MY BEST... MY FINEST CREATION...

...YOU HAVE *DESTROYED* ME! AND I...? I WILL DESTROY--

CHOK!

WIN-AWK-?

WIN-awk-! WIN! Ani-mates *FREE!*

AT LAST, AT LAST!

Oh, BIRD-BRAIN, I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU! AND YOU WON, AND HAVE THE CROWN... OR WHATEVER IT IS...

...SO I GUESS THAT MAKES YOU THE LEADER AND...

...oh, I'M SO PROUD OF YOU!

DOUG, DOUG, WHERE *ARE* YOU? IT'S *SAFE* TO COME OUT NOW! COME AND *CONGRATULATE* HIM!

Oh... RAHNE... oh, NO!

WHAT... WHAT IS IT, DANI?

DOUG!

DOUG...?

DOUG... *STOP* IT!

COME ON, GET UP, STOP TEASING US...

...YOU ARE TEASING US... AREN'T YOU...?

NOooo!

I TOLD HIM TO BE CAREFUL, I TOLD HIM TO KEEP OUT OF THE WAY!

Oh... WHY DIDN'T HE *LISTEN* TO ME...?

SEL*FRIEN*DEAREST*DOUG*, SELF HAS RETURNED FROM SKY! VILLAINS ARE DEFEATED!

DOUG'S BEEN SHOT, 'LOCK! HE... HE'S DEAD!

WHY DO YOU LIE THERE? CAN WE NOT NOW EXPERIENCE JOYOUS REUNION?

WE WERE SO PROUD OF HOW WE DISOBEYED MAGNETO... HOW WE RAN OFF AND HANDLED THIS OURSELVES.

MAGNETO WAS RIGHT TO GROUND US. IF WE'D OBEYED, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED.

FRIEND! Fri-AWK-end!

SAM... YOU'RE RIGHT. *NONE* OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED... BIRD-BRAIN'S PEOPLE WOULD BE SLAVES...

WITH DOUG'S HELP... BECAUSE DOUG WANTED IT SO MUCH... WE DID WHAT WE COULD...!

THAT PART AT LEAST... IT TURNED OUT OKAY!

...AND HODGE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE, TOO... TRYING TO KILL ANY MUTANT HE COULD FIND!

AND HE PAID =hee hee= oh, HOW I MADE HIM PAY!

YOU--? *YOU* MADE HIM PAY?

NOT... NOT ON PURPOSE, I ASSURE YOU! I... I WAS GOING TO KILL THE *WOLF GIRL* =hee hee=

IT'S ONLY *JUST!* AFTER ALL, YOU WERE MY SUBJECTS, I *COULDN'T* LET THEM TAKE YOU... COULD I?

AND THE BOY, THE LITTLE *FOOL*, THREW HIMSELF IN FRONT OF HER!

WHY =hee hee= YOU'D THINK HE *WANTED* TO DIE!

AND WHAT DO *YOU* WANT--?

ILLYANA... *NO!*

PLEASE... DON'T!

HE... HE *LOOKS* HUMAN, BUT REALLY HE'S JUST AN *ANIMAL*, WHO RENDS AND TEARS WITHOUT THOUGHT OR CONSCIENCE!

WE AREN'T, ILLYANA! WE CAN'T BE...!

FEED THE *DEMONS* THEN, ANIMAL!

AND MAY YOUR AGONY LAST FOR AN ETERNITY!

Good fffight! Good ffood! HUNGRRRRY!

NO!

MEN! =awk= Honor DEAD!

CCCAN'T be men. No CCCLOTHES. No NAMMMES.

CCCLOTHES make man. That... LAW!

NO... YOU'RE *WRONG!* CLOTHES DON'T MAKE YOU ANYTHING!

MAKIN' *CHOICES* IS WHAT MAKES YOU A *MAN*.

ANIMALS... THEY RUN ON INSTINCT! THEY DON'T THINK... THEY JUST DO WHAT THEY FEEL LIKE DOIN'!

BUT A MAN'S GOTTA SEE WHAT *NEEDS* DOIN'-- AN' *THINK*-- AN' *DECIDE* TA ACT LIKE ONE.

LIKE... LIKE DOUG DID. AN' TO HECK WITH THE CONSEQUENCES.

SOMETIMES MEN GET IT WRONG, BUT THAT'S WHAT CHOICE IS ALL ABOUT.

YOU COMIN' TA *OUR* RESCUE... LIKE *DOUG* CAME TO RAHNE'S... MAKES YOU *ANI-MATES* MORE HUMAN THAN A LOT OF FOLKS.

YOU'VE CHOSEN WHAT YOU'LL *BE*...

...AN' YOU'VE EARNED THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE NAMES FOR *YOURSELVES!*

IT... IT'S WHAT *DOUG* WOULDA WANTED.

NEXT: *TRUTH*... AND CONSEQUENCES!

The Fall of the Mutants

Syl3nt Bob